

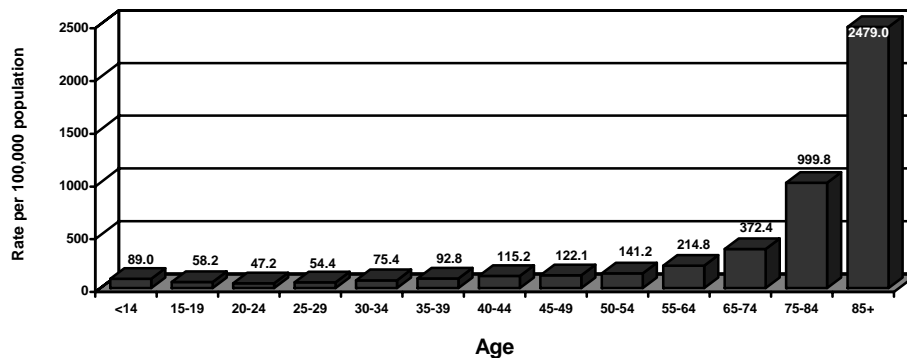


## PREVENTION OF FALLS AMONG OLDER ADULTS

Nationally, 30-60% of older adults (over 65) experience a fall each year.<sup>2,3</sup> In 2000, 1.6 million senior adults in the United States were seen in emergency departments for injuries sustained from a fall.<sup>4</sup> Older adults are hospitalized for fall-related injuries five times more often than for other causes.<sup>4</sup> In Rhode Island, elders have by far the highest rates of fall-related death and hospitalization compared to all other ages (Figure 1). For Rhode Islanders over the age of 65, falls are the leading cause of injury-related death<sup>1</sup>. Roughly

**Figure 1**

**Fall Hospitalization Rates by Age, Rhode Island, 1999-2003**



Data Source: Rhode Island Hospital Discharge Data, 1999-2003; data provided by the Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis

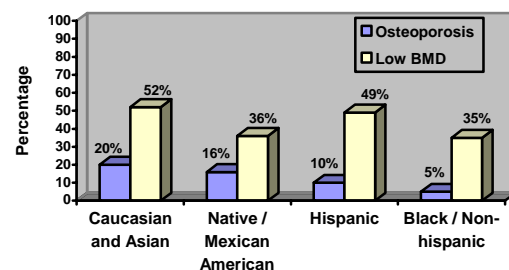
66% of all accidental deaths in this age group are caused by a fall-related injury.<sup>1</sup> Compared to elder men, elder women are disproportionately affected by falls. For women over the age of 65, falls are the leading cause of injury hospitalization, accounting for 82% of the injury admissions in 2000.<sup>4</sup> Factors that increase the risk of falling include lack of physical activity; use of multiple medications; certain health conditions; and environmental factors.<sup>4</sup>

### Prevent Falls and Hip Fractures in Women

Hip fracture is the fall-related injury that causes the greatest number of deaths and institutionalizations.<sup>4</sup> Women are particularly susceptible, sustaining 80% of all hip fractures.<sup>5</sup> White, post-menopausal women have a 1 in 7 chance of fracturing a hip – reflecting higher rates of osteoporosis among this population (Figure 2). Only 25% of hip fracture patients make a full recovery, while 24% of those over age

**Figure 2**

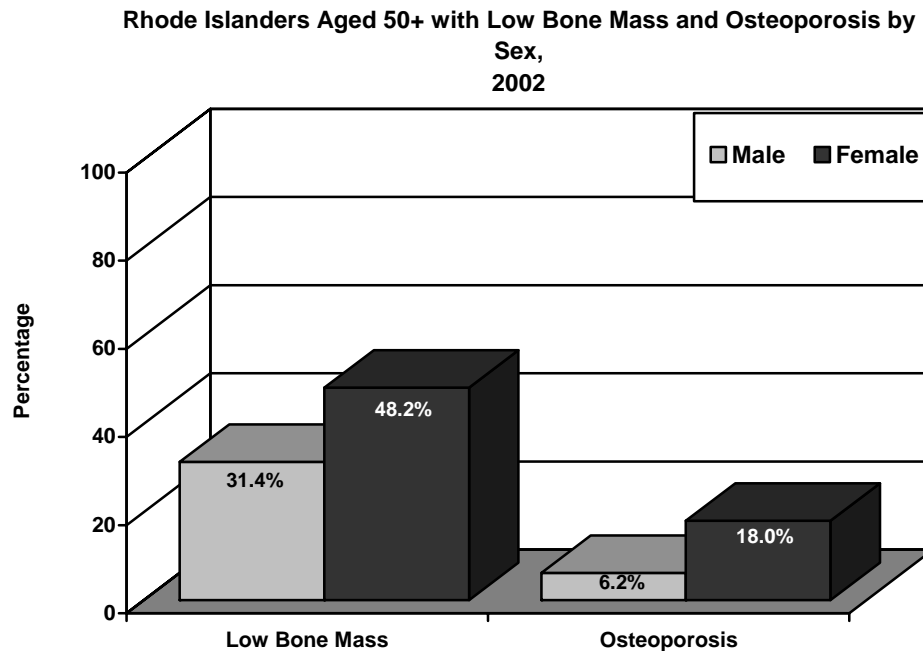
**Percentage of US Women aged 50+ with Osteoporosis and Low BMD, by Race**



Source: National Osteoporosis Foundation, 2002

50 will die within 12 months after sustaining their injury.<sup>6</sup> With the aging baby boom generation, the number of people aged 65+ is projected to increase from 39 to 70 million between 2010 and 2030.<sup>4</sup> The problem of hip fractures is expected to increase dramatically with the rise in population of individuals over the age of 65.

**Figure 3**



Data source: America's Bone Health: The State of Osteoporosis and Low Bone Mass in our Nation; National Osteoporosis Foundation, 2002

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